

**Lieutenant Governor  
Joseph E. Kernan, Director**  
INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
ONE NORTH CAPITOL, SUITE 700  
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA 46204  
TEL 317 232 8800  
[www.indianacommerce.com](http://www.indianacommerce.com)

**For Immediate Release:** July 1, 2003

**Media Contact:** Jeff Harris, Indiana Department of Commerce, 317.232.2464

Greg Beumer, Indiana Department of Commerce, 265.285.1550

## ***Kernan Announces American Keeper Corp. to Invest \$1.9 Million in New Castle***

INDIANAPOLIS — Hailing a \$1.9 million investment and the creation of 49 new jobs, Lt. Governor Joe Kernan today welcomed a new Japanese automotive company to New Castle.

American Keeper Corp. will buy an existing 49,756 square foot building, located at 3300 Sun Commercial Drive, and purchase new equipment for the facility. The majority of the jobs, which the company expects to fill by 2006, will be in light assembly.

The project is supported by an incentive package from the Indiana Department of Commerce and assistance from the New Castle/Henry County Economic Development Corp. and the city of New Castle.

"American Keeper clearly recognizes that Indiana is a great place to do business," said Kernan, who leads the state's economic development efforts as the director of the Department of Commerce. "I'm sure that steps we've taken in the last year – the restructuring of our tax system and the Energize Indiana economic development plan – will result in more companies making the decision to locate or expand in Indiana."

Established in 1943, parent company Keeper Co. Ltd. is headquartered in Fujisawa, Kanagawa, Japan. Its subsidiary, American Keeper, produces axle, steering and engine component parts for the automotive industry. The company's products include oil seals, dust seals, dust keepers, oil gauges, seal washers, o-rings, packings, boots, dust covers and rubber and plastic production for industrial use. Keeper Company has annual sales of approximately \$5.9 million.

"American Keeper Corp. is very excited about locating our plant in New Castle, Indiana. The combination of an outstanding work force, the quality of the building and the efforts of both the local community and the state of Indiana were key factors in the selection of New Castle," said David Alexander, who is plant administrator of the company.

-more-

New Castle competed for the factory with locations in Ohio and Kentucky. Keeper Co. currently has operations in Japan, Taiwan, China and Korea, as well as U.S. locations in Kentucky and North Carolina.

In support of the project, the Indiana Department of Commerce awarded a \$25,000 Skills Enhancement Fund grant to help to defray the costs of training new employees in basic work skills and company-specific skills necessary to support the project. Working with the Department of Workforce Development, Commerce will also assist the company to secure future grants from the Technology Enhancement Certifications for Hoosiers, or TECH Fund.

In addition, Henry County offered American Keeper a ten-year tax abatement on all personal property, worth \$53,351 and the city of New Castle agreed to waive all utility transfer and hook-up fees, a \$1,000 value.

The New Castle/Henry County Economic Development Corp. also pledged \$10,000 to the new business as a reimbursable grant to be used for job training or electrical service upgrades. The job training funds may be used to reimburse the company for costs associated with sending employees to Japan. In addition, the Economic Development Corp. has offered the use of two offices and two conference rooms at no cost that can be utilized during the company's renovation of its New Castle factory. The space is valued at \$1,200.

Bryan Coats, president/CEO of the New Castle/Henry County Economic Development Corp., added, "We are excited that American Keeper has chosen Henry County to expand their operations and to create new jobs. Our efforts to help them succeed will be ongoing."

"I want to thank American Keeper Corp. for deciding to locate in New Castle. Our office stands ready to assist the company with its future growth plans," said Greg Beumer, who, as regional director, is the state's lead economic development official for Commerce's Region 8, based in Muncie.

Companies interested in learning more about the training grants or other Commerce incentives should contact their regional Commerce office at 800.463.8081, or access its Web site at [www.indianacommerce.com](http://www.indianacommerce.com).

###